

# Lemongrass

Savory Aroma

In original Thai food menus, there was no stir-fried dishes. Therefore, it can be observed that there are more varieties of stewed, boiled, and steamed food than stir-fried menus. Of course, with boiled and steamed dishes, there is a greater chance of producing a fishy smell. This becomes the starting point for multi-purpose herbs that help all dishes to smell good. The hero of Thai food here is the lemongrass.

The lemongrass is an herbal plant that originated in India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. It is an herb that many houses grow as home-grown vegetables due to its easiness in growing, its multi-purposes, and its durability to the weather and pests. Those who have seen the lemongrass in vegetable stalls or in supermarkets might be surprised that the entire lemongrass plant, if you look on the surface, looks like a messy clump of grass. However, what's hidden under that clump of grass is the lemongrass. The parts that are usually used are called the stalk and the underground rootstock. The popular species are Ta Khrai Yuak and Ta Khrai Kap Daeng. The benefits of both species are they can be grown all year-round. The plants are big with a long harvesting period. Yuak species takes about 7 months and Kap Daeng species takes about 6-7 months, which is slightly faster than the Yuak species.

Even though ginger has many benefits, it is not easy to eat due to its dried and hard stalk. Either you squeeze for its juice or you have to find the proper way to deal with the lemongrass. The old wisdom of Thai people was able to bring out the abilities of the lemongrass for completely getting rid of fishy smell in food and increasing savory aroma. When you steam it with food, the most difficult plants to eat can become a delicious dish. With lemongrass, the cooking ability of Thai people is clearly on display. There are various menus to choose according to your preferences, from having it fresh in steamed mackerel spicy salad with lemongrass; spicy salad dressing or herbal steamed fish where the lemongrass is steamed until it is soft, eaten with fish and seafood dip; or hot and spicy soup. Lemongrass can greatly bring out the good smell of ingredients in a recipe. Not only is it delicious, it also provides a full range of benefits.

Nowadays, lemongrass isn't only an ingredient in domestic Thai food anymore. With its benefits and unique smell, lemongrass has become one of the herbal Thai foods that is very popular in other countries. In the future, lemongrass might become one of the important economic crops in Thailand.